ON THE ENGLISH NOMENCLATURE OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK,

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"These as they change, Almighty Father, these,
Are but the varied God."—THOMPSON'S HYMN.

ONE of the most curious investigations connected with our Saxon forefathers, their religious belief and its relative position to our subsequent Christianity, arises from considering the names which we attribute to the seven days of the week, in connexion with those given them by the later Romans, and especially by those nations in which the Roman language took the strongest hold.

For the Romans themselves the great difficulty is, to fix when the introduction of weeks, or a computation by seven days, was first brought into the Roman calendar. It is usual to say that, after the express commands of Jehovah and the example of creation, this division became a sacred ordinance to the Jews, and was from them copied by the Romans, about the time of Augustus.

But, if we trust the learned Frenchman, Bailly (Hist. de l'astronomie ancienne), the seven days were used in their computations of time, by the Chinese, the Hindoos, and the Egyptians; and though to each of them was given the name of one of the seven known planets, yet this was not done in any order, regulated by distance or size—by brilliancy or motion—but perfectly arbitrarily; and, what is most singular, the same irregular sequence of deities is found in all the other nations we have enumerated. In the order they stand—Luna, Mars, Mercurius, Jovis, Venus, Saturnius, Sol—it is in vain to search for any reason for this sequence in any of the attributes, or in any supposed rank or power in these presiding deities over each particular day. If, therefore, the present essay and our indigenous denominations, which we we shall find are all pure Saxon—the only nation, I believe,

which preserves them in their full integrity—should clear up the difficulty, it will prove the continuity of our Saxon mythology and language, and our own tenacity of purpose in having held close to an original series and nomenclature, which our forefathers had embraced for reasons all their own, and transmitted with their colonies to our island.[1]

The seven planets themselves have no corresponding rank or sequence in the mythology of Rome. We have Jupiter and Saturn, Venus, Mercury, and Mars, from their Olympus; but why have these respectively a preference over Juno, Neptune, Minerva, Pluto, Apollo, Diana, &c.?

The sun and moon visible in the heavens were never looked upon by the Romans as actual deities; they had passed that early phase of Sabaism. It was by their effects and action merely that this people acknowledged their power and personified their benefits. They knew them for gods, as Phœbus or Apollo only, or as Diana or Cynthia. Their direct retention in the seven gods, as Sol and Luna is alone

[1] On the antiquity of the system of seven days prior to the time of Moses, the following extract from Parkhurst's Lexicon, Edit. 1811, p. 715, note, will be relevant:—

"We find, from time immemorial," says the learned President Goguet, "the use of this period among all nations, without any variation of form. The Israelites, Assyrians, Egyptians, Indians, Arabians, and, in a word, all the nations of the East, have in all ages made use of a week consisting of seven days. (See Scaliger de Emen. Tem.—Selden de Jure. nat. et Gent, Lib. III. p. 17. Memoires de l'Academie des Inscrip. Tom. IV. p. 65. We find the same custom amongst the ancient Romans, Gauls, Britons, Germans, the nations of the North and of America. (See Le Spectat. de la Nature, Tom. VIII., p. 53.) Many vain conjectures have been formed concerning the reasons and motives which determined all mankind to agree to this primitive division of their time. Nothing but tradition concerning the space of time employed in the creation of the world could give rise to this universal immemorial practice." (Origin of Laws, &c., Vol. I., Book ii., cap. 2, art. ii., p. 230; Edit. Edinb.) "The months of the ancient Scandinavians were divided into weeks of seven days, which we have any knowledge of from the extremity of Asia to that of Europe." (Mallet North. Ant. Vol. II., p. 337.)

In Cary's Palæologia Chronologiea, Lond. fol. 1677, p. 7, note, we have—"Ex Georgii Syncelli Chronologia MS. in Regis Galliarum Bibliotheca legitur quod priusquam ratio computandi per menses et annos inventa fuisset ab astrologiis, veteres illos patres (scil ante diluvium) spatia distinxisse tantum κατ' επτωμαδας. Ex. C Salamasii indicatione citat A Rivetus. in dissertatione de Sabbato. So Selden hath it, Lib. de Jur. nat. et Gent. secundum Hebr. iii. cap. 17."

sufficient proof that this Hebdomadas is not of Roman origin.

In the *Philological Museum*, published at Cambridge, the first essay of vol I. is a very long and very learned paper on the "week days," by J. C. H(are), in which, however, (so large is the theme) only one portion of his subject is discussed, viz., the question, "How came the Romans to arrange those names, which we immediately perceive to be those of what the ancients held to be the seven planets, in the particular order adapted?" leaving the other, and to us the most important portion,—"and by what analogy were our ancestors guided in the substitution of their national gods for the Roman?"—to some other opportunity, which, if published, I have not been able to find.

It is to this latter query that I shall principally call the attention of the Society, and I flatter myself that I shall prove to them that it contains a false assumption—viz., that our ancestors copied their reckoning by weeks, and the names of the days, from the Romans; whereas the direct contrary was the fact: the Romans copied them from those Indo-Germanic nations of which our Saxon forefathers were an extensive tribe.

This classic custom or imitation may have arisen from some undercurrent of ancient Pelasgic tradition, and of those remote periods when the Autochtyons of Italy, Gaul, and Germany, had not separated into nations; or else—and this more probable—after the conquests of Cæsar had carried the Roman arms to and beyond the Rhine, when they first discovered the deities placed in a consecutive series suitable to the belief and Theogony of the Teutonic races.

It is, however, far from my wish or intention to disparage the author's, Mr. Hare's, great learning and research, which has gained him the praises of the learned Jacob Grimm, in his *Deutsche Mythologie* (p. 111), and I shall use much of his illustrations, with thanks for their having been pointed out, though from the same data we both arrive at differing results. The remarks, however, of Grimm, in the passage cited, are so curious, that a literal translation must be acceptable.

"If we admit, as seems almost certain and necessary, that, since the first century and the eight or nine following ones, an uninterrupted (Uebertragung) transfer of Mercury and some similar deities to the indigenous gods of Gaul and Germany,

took place and was received by the learned, still we demand —firstly, satisfaction on a yet unsufficiently elucidated and remarkable appearance—viz., the earlier, throughout half Europe, prevalence of the heathen denominations of *the week.* These names are to be viewed as a favourable specimen of German heathendom that we should not overlook. I fancy this matter as follows. The names of the seven week days (εβδομας) came from Egypt, by means of the inhabitants of Alexandria, since they are found at very remote periods in Western Asia, though a satisfactory relation of these names for the week days by the Romans is found much later; for we meet the first mention of the Dies Saturni coupled with the Jewish sabbath in the elegy of Tibullus (Lib. I. 3, v. 18).

"At ego sum causatus, aves aut omina dira,
Saturni aut sacram me tenuisse diem."

(So Ovid, Ars Amandi, I. 415—Remed. Amor, 220). We have, too, ἡλιον ημερα in Justin Martyr. Apol I. 67—Dies Solis, Ερμυ and Αφροδιτης ημερα in Clemens Alexandrinus Stromata, vii. 12—Dies Mercurii and Dies Veneris: but Dio Cassius first mentions their regular and complete introduction not much before his own time, and he flourished only circa 229, A.C." This latter passage bears so fully on the subject, that I cannot but introduce it in a Latin dress, somewhat condensed. Speaking of the Jews, he says (Lib. xxxviii.):—

"Diversum a reliquis homnibus, obtinent cum aliis in rebus usque vita quotidiana, tum eo presertim quod nullum ex cæteriis diis colunt, unum autem quendam, summo studio venerantur. Tum quoque temporis nullum Hierosolymis simulachrum extabat nimirium suum illum deum ineffabilem invisiblemque existimantes, religioso ejus cultu cæteros mortales superant. Cui templum summæ molis pulcherrimumque extruxerunt; hoc dempto quod apertum et nullo culmine tectum fuit. *Diem quæ Saturni vocatur* religioni habent eamque ab omni opere actioneque seria vacantes ducunt. Atque is quidem deus eorum quis sit, unde ita coli cœperit, quantopere ab is timeatur, a nullis dictum est neque ad presentem narrationem facit. *Quod autem dies ad septem sidera, illa quos planetas apellarunt referuntur id ab Ægyptiis haud ita dudum,* ut paucis dicam, *institutum ad omnes homines dimanavit.* Nam priscis Græcis quantum mihi constat, notus is mos non fuit. Et quandoquidem is nunc et apud omnes homines (ubique) et *presertim apud Romanos usitatus est*

paucis, qua ratione et quo pacto ita institutum sit disseram."

We may at present defer all these reasons, until we come to compare them with other conjectures.

Before this institution of seven days, therefore, the Nundinæ prevailed at Rome, and are well known. They may have been originally the ancient pelasgic seven days to which I have before alluded; but the addition of a feast, or market day, before and after, would bring them to the number of nine, or novem dies, which, contracted into Nundinæ, was the sole division of days at Rome, of which we have certain accounts prior to Dio Cassius, as above noticed.

Another reason may be given for the Nundinæ, if we couple them with the division of the Roman year into ten months before Numa; each month consisting of four Nundinæ or thirty-six days, and consequently the entire year of three hundred and sixty days, which the imperfect astronomy of those times seems to have considered the full complement of the solar year.

Tacitus, it is true (Hist. Lib. v. cap. 4), in the curious and distorted picture he has left us of the Jewish nation, gives a dark allusion to the week, in conjunction with the planets.

"Septimo die otium placuisse ferunt quia is (Moses) finem laborum tulerit; deinde blandiente inertia, septimum quoque annum ignaviæ datum. Alii honorem cum Saturno haberi; seu principia religionis tradentibus Idæis, quos cum Saturno pulsos et conditores gentis accepimus; seu quod e septem sideribus, queis mortales reguntur altissimo orbe et præcipua potentia stella Saturni feratur ac pleraque cælestium vim suam et cursum septimos per numeros conficiant."

Still, considerable doubt rests on every Roman relation on the subject, either from the obscurity of the passage as above, or from the direct contradiction of authors. Plutarch tells us the Nundinæ were consecrated to Saturn, whilst Macrobius gives Jupiter as their patron; nor can it be called a felicitous guess by Ideler in the Berlin Transactions, who supposes the attribution to Saturn was from some fancied resemblance between their own Saturnalia and the rest day of the Jewish sabbath, for which it would be difficult to find a conformity.

The Nundinæ differ from dies Saturni in one particular remarkably: they could not fall on the calends or Nones of any month, and any year on which they would have fallen on the kalends, or first day of January, was intercalated by a day to prevent it: otherwise the new year was believed to becom

one of misery and misfortune to the entire nation. The dies Saturni, on the contrary was, as well for the week as for any other division of time, a favourable period of commencement. Saturn and Janus were one, and the latter is more particularly invoked by Ovid (Fasti, Lib. I. v., 7).

Jane biceps, anni taciti labentis origo,

as Virgil gives to Saturn the honourable office of heading the rule of the immortals on earth (Æneid, viii.)

Primus ab æthereo venit Saturnus Olympo.

We have already mentioned the general derivation of the word Nundinæ from novem dies, though like the German acht tage for the week, and the French quinze jours, or the quindici giorni of the Italians for the fortnight, the tale might not always be correct, and therefore another derivation may be thrown out for consideration. The Nundinæ were originally days of recreation and sacrifice, and therefore, like the Feriæ, dies non fasti; on them no public business could be undertaken; no courts of law were then open, though this was subsequently altered, and the prætors sat, that the country people who flocked to market with their produce might also have their disputes adjudicated on. If we, therefore, suppose that the word *ding* or *thing*, so universally prevalent through Northern Europe for a court or tribunal, to have been early known in Italy and subsequently lost, the prefix *non* or *nun* would express their abstinence from law life as *nithing*, as our Saxon laws express an outlaw—a worthless fellow—and it would also account for its boding of ill, if personified as the opprobrious *niding*, and be the reason for Ovid's expression (Fasti, Lib. I. v., 57).

Nonarum tutela Deo caret,

for without the covering protection of a deity, the permission of entering to so many of the country rabble would hardly have been prudent.

This seems to be a condensed statement of all that we know of the Roman diurnal divisions, and of the introduction of a seven-days' computation into Rome, which, after the Julian time-reformation was effected, became more general, and was possibly one of the consequences of this judicious innovation, until with the principles of Christianity under Constantine, it was formally inducted into the Roman Calendar.

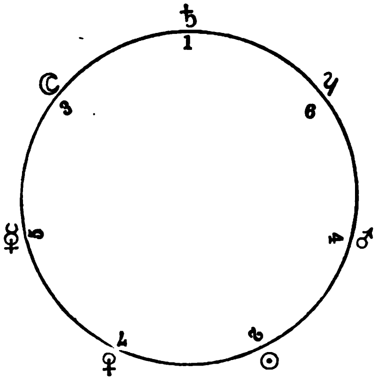
Before, however, adverting to the Teutonic and Northern

names of the week days, we will shew the various plans in which some learned writers have endeavoured to account for their Roman positions, which I believe you will agree with me are more ingenious than probable; and their variety will prove the necessity admitted by the Romans for fresh explanation, and the unsatisfactory state in which they have left the question.

Dio Cassius gives two methods;—in the first he takes the planets in the Ptolemaic order, and naming them in their order of distance from the earth—Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon—he begins with Saturn, as the most distant, and counting the hours, the 25th, or first hour of the next day, will belong to Sol or the Sun, who therefore gives his name to the second day; the 49th, or first of the third day, to the Moon; the 73rd, or first of the fourth day, to Mars; the 97th, or first of the fifth day, to Mercury; the 121st, or first of the sixth day, to Jupiter; and the 145th, or first of the seventh day to Venus, as the days each governs respectively.

A most ingenious method, certainly; but too complex to have originated a mode of enumeration in the early periods, and by nations to whom the Ptolemaic system was totally unknown; that it was not, however, satisfactory to Dio himself may be inferred from his offering another solution, according to a musical scale, which he calls Diatesseron, of which, however—as I am unfortunately unskilled in the mysteries of the gamut or of thorough bass—I must be satisfied with a mere enumeration.

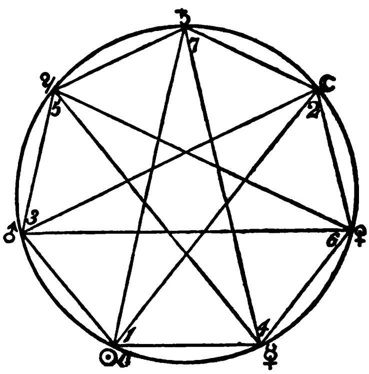
He places the seven planets in a circle, according to the following diagram:—and beginning again with Saturn, he passes each time he names a planet over the two next intervening to name the third. Thus, if Saturn be first by counting to the right, passing by the following Jupiter and Mars, we gain Sol the Sunday; starting again from it, we omit Venus and Mercury, and have Luna or the Moon for the third day; and so from



the third sign again is Mars, the fourth day; the fifth is Wednesday or Mercury; the sixth Thursday or Jupiter; and the seventh Friday or Venus.

No doubt, many other hypotheses might be formed by ingenious mathematicians, with sufficient time and patience. I shall show you a second diagram by the learned Scaliger,[1] which not only testifies his great learning, but also his dissatisfaction with both these preceding ones of Dio Cassius. He takes an eptagon, or seven equal sized figure, inscribed in a circle, and upon the junction of these seven lines he places the signs of the planets, but in a succession very different from that of Dio Cassius; and I may here observe that the finding a suitable order of position seems the principal difficulty, and the key to all further solutions of this kind.

The following diagram will give his method. Beginning with any of them, he draws from it and every other of the signs seven isoceles triangles to the chords of the arc betwixt every two. In these triangles the star at the right basle angle is the first; that at the vertex the second; that at the left basle angle the third; and this is the order in which they are opposite to one another. Thus, if we begin with the Sun, (1) the Moon (2) is opposite to him and Mars (3) on the descending line. From Mercury (4) we ascend to Jupiter (5); from Jupiter descend to Venus (6); and Saturn (7) remains at the apex of a triangle in solitary greatness, without a vis a vis.



I think it need scarcely be asked if any of the stated methods are satisfactory to this assembly. The more complicated and ingenious, the more distant they must be considered from the ideas and opinions of the remote nations amongst which undoubtedly they first arose for the division of time into weeks, consequent upon their early observance of the moon-phases, and their veneration of that luminary.

[1] De emendatione Temporum. Edit. 1629, p. 8.

I must again impress upon your attention, that in this paper it is with the *names* of these week days and their *sequence* that I have undertaken to grapple; but shall for the present restrict myself to the nomenclature of Europe.

In all the countries which earliest and longest remained under Roman sway, these names take their origin from the Roman mythology. I will only instance the French Lundi, Mardi, Mecredi, Jeudi, Venredi, Samedi, Dimanche,—respectively from Luna, Mars, Mercurius, Jovis, Venus, Saturnius; the latter form an etymological agreement which would require too extensive an explanation at present. But you will again observe that, as with the planets, we have in them all no set order of power, or rank, nor any other satisfactory reason for this sequence, according to the stations given by their poets in the classic Olympus. If we, however, look to the Northern names, we shall find that these Roman terms are but translations of the names found in all Northern theogonies. The religion of Italy was eminently tolerative; and when, in the progress of the Roman arms and conquests, they discovered new deities, they were induced, from the best conformities of attributes and offices, to ascribe to them the names of their own creed. Thus *Woden*, who is represented throughout the Edda as the leader of the Asi and Indo-Germanic race, to the sea of Azoph and Asgard, was titled Mercury. Thor, the wielder of the thunder, and his dreadful missive, was changed into their own cloud-compelling Jupiter; and Venus, their beau-ideal of all female loveliness, was made god-mother to the more masculine and less graceful Freia. Tuisco they named Mars—for they found the name of Teutones and the exercise of valour rarely separate. Of Saturn from the God Sater. Of the Sun and Moon days I need not dilate. Jamieson's Dictionary gives a god Seater yet for Scotland; but it is evident that herein the Romans were not original, but imitators; and therefore that we must seek a reason for these names beyond their empire. Had the modern Germans kept their old creed, we should most probably have found in their language, and its cognate northern dialects, these names intact. But the influence of the Christian system—and possibly a hankering after originality—has removed from their days' names almost entirely their celestial titles. We have, it is true, Freitag or Freia's day, and the Sun and Moon days. But Wednesday is Mittewoch (mid-

week), and Thor's day is the thunder-day; Donnerstag—and Tuesday the council-day; Dinstag from ding or thing, a tribunal—as the Thingwald, the court mound of the Isle of Man. Saturday is Sonabeud, Sunday eve. These denominations help us to consider and illustrate a more satisfactory source for these names, but are in themselves insufficient.

Where, then, are we to look for the true and entire series and its real cause? and I answer fearlessly—in our own language alone, and its ancient faith. In the first, the names of the days remain without alteration in their full integrity, as is found in no other tongue; in the second, by the consideration of what remains of their creeds and customs, we can find in this sequence of our deities an order of rank and power that is perfectly consistent and satisfactory.

Our present order of Sun-Mon-Tues-Wednes-Thurs-Fri and Satur-day embraces the seven principal,—and possibly, in the first ages—only deities of the Northern Indo-Germanic nations. Their series, however, as we now name them consecutively after Monday, is not regular, and in no discoverable order or sequence; but the question is, can this order be that originally fixed upon on the formation of this creed; and is it not rather a consequence of the introduction of Christianity, when, in honour of the resurrection, the Sunday was given as the first day of the week, and preceded all the rest? It will therefore be necessary to inquire, was such the pre-Christian circuit and order of our heathen forefathers, and if not, at what other point did they commence?

To arrive at this knowledge, permit me to give you a slight abstract of the power, rank, and attributes of each of these seven deities as acknowledged in the Edda, and of which reminiscences are still found in the neglected traditions of our peasantry, and the by-corners of our most distant counties.

The first of them in power and pre-eminence was certainly Thor. His command of the thunder is the same force which gives superiority to the Zeus of Homer and to the Jupiter Capitolinus of the Romans, whilst his dreaded Miölnir, the Crux ansata, was a fit representative and nearly akin, in its oldest form, to the double trident or thunderbolt of Jove. The command over the most direful, as well as powerful, element of nature, gave a common character and dignity to its possessors.

The next in dignity was *Woden*, to whose activity and

cunning the Romans gave evidence, in uniformly translating him into their ideas as the volatile and deceitful Mercury.

The wife of Thor claims the next rank; this is Freia, though the Edda sometimes oscillated in mentioning a male and a deity as Freir. It was something like flattery in the Romans to give to this rude and unfeminine deity their collective title for all the loves and the graces. The Roman Venus has little in common with this Scandinavian Valkyrier, but her sex.

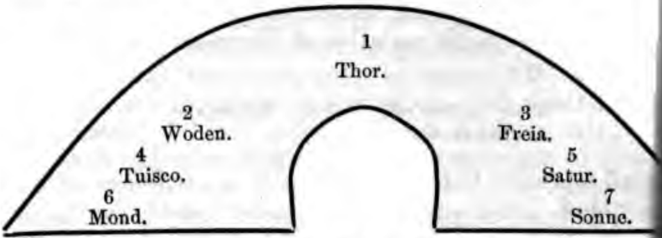
The fourth in dignity and place was Tuisco, who, from a German title of his day to which I have before alluded, is put as the presiding deity over laws and their just execution. When, therefore, according to Tacitus (Germ, cap. 1), they make *Tuisco* the author of their race and the father of Mannus, I think they clothe under this myth the beautiful allegory, that mankind can form themselves into nations and races only by the observance and cultivation of just laws and equitable rule.

The fifth in order was *Sater*—a name possibly corrupted from *Asa Tyr*, though a district of Westphalia is still called Saterland, and the name of Saterburg is still found in our English Gazetters. His relation to the Latin Saturnius is very remote and recondite, and would require a longer tax upon your patience than I can now hope for. The Latin transferer may have possibly been induced to fix upon the father of Jove from a phonical resemblance.

The Moon seems to have taken place prior to the Sun, from his masculine sex, which, as Der Mond, is still retained by the German tongue, and inculcated by the ungallant rule of our grammars, that the masculine is more worthy than the feminine; for our sun, the lord and master of day, as *die Sonne*, is a lady in all the Indo-Germanic dialects; but in our own it has a pre-eminence, for which the bright luminary is probably indebted to the want of sexual distinction in our articles permitting our use of the masculine pronouns in relation to him, without impropriety and as a consequence of superiority, both in power and usefulness.

This is the order in which our seven deities of the week days rank as to power in the Scandinavian and Teutonic mythologies. It will be my purpose to shew you how this rank holds good in the sequence of these days, and how we must place them and commence, to retain their rotative precedence with the successive progress of each week.

It is according also to this rank that we find the princ deities placed in the representations left to us of th There is an old blazonment at the University of Up with Thor, Woden, and Friga thus relatively placed, and succession of the rest seems natural and necessary.[1] W we, therefore, picture the whole seven, seated in conclave, (the Homeric gods on Olympus), in the halls of Muspelh the invisible heavens; or quaffing mead by the side of t heroic sons of earth, in the bright Valhalla, we must ima their position according to the following scheme:—



[1] The pre-eminence of Thor will be fully proved by the following e from "Eccard de Origine Germanorum":—*Thor* certe in templo Ups medius and honoratiori loco locatus fuit inter Wodanum & Fric *Statuas* inquit ADAMUS *trium Deorum venerantur populus, ita ut potent eorum Thor in medio solium habeat triclinium. Hinc et inde locum p Wodan et Fricco. Thor* ipse aëri præsidere, & tonitru, fulmina, imbrefque, serena & fruges gubernare creditus, & cum sceptro *Iouem* mere visus est. Inter Saxonum etiam Deos primum locum obti *Thunner* vel *Donner* vocatus est. Uti enim *donner* nobis *tonitru*, ita trionalibus *torden* significat *tonare*. Doctissimus Princeps & Ep Paderbornensis FERDINANDUS a Furstenberg in vetusto Msto. Palati mae Concilio Liftinensi anno DCCXLIII. habito subiunctam Abrenunciationem diaboli operumque eius & breuem fidei Profe veteri lingua Saxonica conscriptam. Inter alia in ea legitur: *Ec allum dioboles wercum und Wordum; thuna eren de Vuoden end Saxno allem them umboldum the hira genotas sint.* DIETERICUS STADENIUS, veteris linguæ nostræ monumentum interpretatus, & suspicatus est, distinguendum *Saxn Ote:* Verba vero *thuna eren de* legit *thuna* exposuitque *lucorum cultui.* Sed *thun* quidem pro *sepe* atque etiam *loco septo*, nunquam tamen pro *luco* usurpatum legi: nec de lucis, sed renunciatione falsorum Deorum ibi agitur, qui ordine recensentur itaque scribo: *thunaer ende Vuoden end Saxn Ote.* Ita sensus integræ est: *Ego abrenuntio omnibus Diaboli operibus et verbis, Thunaro* (sine *et Wodano et Saxonum Odino et omnibus spiritibus malis, qui consortes sunt.*

In this order I have followed the later custom of the Romans Tricliniums, which, like most of their usages was received from Etruria, and this latter country had undoubtedly its first colonisation from the Pelasgi, an Indo-Germanic people, and consequently of the same race as the Scandinavian and German first settlers, and must have followed the same laws and usages.[1]

The rotation of time necessarily requiring a circle, when this Trinclinium was applied to the seven week days, the series was closed at the bottom, and a continuity was thus obtained, and the perpetual revolution commenced, of which, however, with the slight variation of Thomson's words, in my motto I may say—

> " They, as they roll, Almighty Father, they,
> Are but the varied God."

For all represent but various powers or attributes of one superior God.

But, being now without beginning or end, an arbitrary starting point might be taken, and was so actually by different races, according to their differing views of the power and pre-eminence of the deities.

As we find, amongst the northern nations Thor occupying the first position, it was natural, and almost necessary, that the week should begin on the day peculiarly dedicated to him. Amongst our heathen forefathers—to speak popularly—Thursday was their Sunday, or holy day.

In the variety of the superstitions and practises of all

[1] This couch, as I have figured it, was usual, and it restricted many of the Roman convivial parties to seven, the number of our week deities. Martial, in the Tenth Book of his Epigrams, XLIV., entitled "Frugale Convivium," has an excellent example of this number and position of his guests. He enumerates five.

> "Stella, Nepos, Cani, Cærealis, Flacce venitis—
> Septem Sigma capit: sex sumus, adde Lupum."

The Sigma will hold, he adds, seven: I am the sixth, and so give the remaining invite to Lupus. The meaning of Sigma here is given by a commentator in a note.

"Lectus erat discubitorius factus in morem literæ gracæ Sigma quæ in prisco more scribebatür ad similitudinem literæ Latinæ, C. Itaque Lectus ille hemicylum, id est, semicirculem imitabatur. *Septem convivas sigma capiet.*"

Europe, in their legends and notices of popular manners, which the Germans more especially have collected with such industry and interest, I have noted more than fifty examples of the popular and exclusive sanctity of Thursday.

In Mecklenburg, on this day, labour is in a great measure restricted to works of necessity. It is thought that if any girl spin on a Thursday evening, Frau Holle throws her an empty spindle, and cries, "*spin this also full.*" It is more especially the day to make pilgrimages to holy wells or shrines, and in lower Saxony is a peculiar favourite for the popular rites. This was also the English custom for this day, particularly on Holy Thursday, sanctified, it is true, by the Christian religion; but it may be a question whether its founder, with a prophet's regard to the weaknesses of his future proselytes, did not choose this day of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and his ascension into heaven on their own Sabbath, the more easily to reconcile them hereafter, to his own institutions. The Church of Rome acknowledged this supremacy and sanctity of Thursday, when it ordained that the most sacred solemnization of its Church—the Procession of Corpus Christi—should be held on this week day.[1]

Mone, the continuator of Creuzer's Symbolik, says of the peasantry of the Russian Baltic provinces, Liefland, Courland, &c., that, as they abstain from spinning on the Thursday, this day seems to have been their Sunday. In Grimm's German Mythology, (new edition, p. 173), he says that unmistakeable traces of the former holiness of Thursday still are found amongst the people. The Church was obliged to interdict abstinence from work on the Thursday—nullus diem

[1] Another papal bending to this pristine feeling is found in that high festival in the Vatican, when every fifty years the Pope solemnly opens a year of Jubilee on a Thursday. This solemnity is measured by the magnificence of pontifical display, and the curious prescription of the ritual, when a door blocked up the previous fifty years is opened by Christ's Vicegerent personally with a golden hammer, and whence symbolically are opened the most effective benisons of mother Church. A malicious critic might feel inclined in this to recal attention to the opening of the Temple of Janus, a classic prelude to all the horrors of War and the direful effects of contests and controversy, and he would find that the site both of the classic and papal entrance was identically the old Janiculum, first seat of old Janus, whilst, curiously enough, the Vatican also would bring to mind the *vaticinations* which were there practised, and which no doubt Janus brought with him thither from the rival Veii and ancient Etruria.

Jovis in otio observet: and in a Rubric, de Feriis, "quæ faciunt Jovi aut Mercurio," we have the prohibition against it; and in another the reproach—"quintam feriam in honorem Jovis honorasti."

I could, as I have already hinted, heap up conformities and corroborations, till they were tiresome; but I find I have already occupied the time which will be more profitably filled by those who follow me, and I will therefore only add one or two of our own popular results on the same topic. To keep from work of any kind on a Sunday, our peasantry repeat the rhyme:

> Who on the sabbath pares his horn,
> 'Twere better for him he had never been born;

but the original Latin prohibition is to Thursday—

> Ac toto Thori die hominibus ungues secare minime licet.

From the Harleian Miscellany MS. I can quote a reference which points to the feelings of our first Christian converts, when Christmas-day, if falling on a Thursday, gave to the coming year much of the character it would have under Thor's rule; he was the presager of war in stormy tempests, but with it a bountiful procurer of the fruits of the earth and the dairy, for thunder is known as a fertiliser. Like the Prussian Percun during a thunderstorm, offerings were brought to him.

> If Christmas day on a Thursday be,
> A windy winter you shall see—
> Windy weather in each week,
> And hard tempests strong and thick.
> The summer shall be good and dry,
> Corn and beasts shall multiply.
> That year is good for lands to till, &c.

In superstitious cures at the present date, Sundays and Thursdays are put upon an equality of efficacy. So, from the statistical account of Scotland (xix. p. 210), I collect:—

"A man in I has the power of curing the king's evil. He touches or rubs over the sore, two Thursdays and two Sundays successively, in the name of the Trinity, and says, '*It is God that cures.*'"

By contrast I might shew that the popular and seaman's dislike for commencing voyages on Friday, or any conside-

ble undertaking, may be accounted for from the necessity it induced of desecrating the Thursday by bustle and preparation. But, as I have before said, I find I am keeping the meeting from more instructive remarks, and will therefore conclude with a couple of Scotch reminiscences of Thursday and its sanctity from Jamieson's Dictionary Supplement; sub voce Beltaine, he says:—

"In regard to the superstitions connected with this day, Thursday, we learn also from Shaw, that in the North of Scotland upon Maundy Thursday, 'the several herds cut staves of service wood (or rowantree) about three feet long, and put two cross sticks into clefts in one end of the staff. These staffs were laid up till the 1st of May. On that day, having adorned the heads of these staves with wild herbs, they fixed them on the tops, or above the doors of their cottages, and this they fancied would preserve the cattle from diseases till next May.'" This I can fancy akin to a sacrifice and offering to their ancient Thor, but as nearly as their Christian creed and priests permitted. In the next and concluding instance from Jamieson, I shall claim corroboration of my theory.

In his article on the word "Beltaine," he mentions a Gaelic poetical, probably rhyming proverb, which translated means—

> Woe to the mother of a magician's son,
> When the Beltaine happens on a Sunday.

It must be reserved to some special and comprehensive researches for a Dictionary of British Mythology, if ever I can bring my extensive collectanea on this neglected branch of archæology before the public, to explain fully the nature of what this Bealtine was; but some elucidation is necessary to understand this proverb, which Jamieson declares himself unable to fathom; and the author of "Britannia after the Romans" declares it "a notion that cannot be easily explained but by supposing that the great slaughter of the Neo Druid Magi happened on that day." The double supposition of a slaughter and the day is a very bold conjecture, and is, I think, not needed, upon a view of the real nature of the Beltaine. It is prevalent, or was lately, in most parts of Scotland, and is found also in Cumberland and Ireland at various seasons,— in some places at Christmas, in some on St. Peter's day, in some on the 1st of May. I will content myself with Pennant's ac-

count of this feast to Bel or Beal, from his Tour to the Highlands, (p. 90):—" On the 1st of May, in the Highlands of Scotland, the herdsmen of every village held their Bealtine. They cut a square trench in the ground, leaving the turf in the middle; on that they make a fire of wood, on which they dress a large caudle of eggs, butter, oatmeal, and milk, and bring besides the ingredients of the caudle, plenty of beer and whisky—for each of the company must contribute something. The rites begin with spilling some of the caudle on the ground, by way of oblation; on that, every one takes a cake of oatmeal, upon which are raised nine square knobs, each dedicated to some particular being, the supposed preserver of their flocks and herds; or to some particular animal, the real destroyer of them. Each person then turns his face to the fire and breaks off a knob, *and flinging it over his shoulders*, says, 'I give this to thee, preserve thou my horses; this to thee, preserve thou my sheep, and so on. After this they use the same ceremony to the noxious animals. This I give to thee, oh fox, spare thou my lambs; this to thee, oh hooded crow; this to thee, oh eagle! When the ceremony is over they dine on the caudle; and after the feast is finished, what is left is hidden by two persons deputed for that purpose; but on the next Sunday they re-assemble and finish the reliques of the first entertainment."

It would be reflecting upon the learning and classical knowledge of this Society could I suppose any one present who would not recognise Pennant's recital but as the exact ritual of a solemn sacrifice to Bel or Beal. The feasting, with its previous libation, the division of the cake, and the throwing these divisions backwards; the retaining a portion for future festivals, are all features of idolatrous worship, and the leading traits of a sacrifice throughout antiquity, and establish, therefore, for the meaning of Bealtine, a solemn feast or sacrifice to the god Bel or Belinus, whom I would prove, if time permitted me, was only a Latin synonym for Thor, and which, therefore, when unchecked by Christian innovation, would have been held on the day peculiarly dedicated to him—the holy day, as I have before observed, of our heathen predecessors. We can therefore interpret the Beltine as their Sunday, according to our Christian notions, and therefore construe the above couplet as follows:

Woe to the mother of a magician's son;

consequently, to one of those fatidical women, put, pars pro toto, for the whole tribe of spae-wives and witches, when their Beltine or high day falls on, or is changed to the Sunday,—in other words, when Sunday supersedes Thursday—when Christianity conquers heathendom.

I shall be happy if this meeting accord to my views and proofs of a deduction of the names and positions of our week days from our own pristine language and most remote theology. I could fortify them by much collateral proof, but I feel that I have trespassed already long enough on the patience of the assembly, and will therefore give place to more entertaining discussion.

My endeavour has been to show that in our English nomenclature of the week days we include all the ancient Saxon deities in a sequence, according with their relative rank when arranged, both by the position given by Adam of Bremen and their several potentialities; that their Roman version was but a translation of these names, without any appreciable order or regularity, and that consequently our English names and order are the oldest and the originals.